

**REMARKS**

Claims 1, 2, 4-12, 14-18 and 19 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 4, 11 and 14 are amended. No new matter is added by these amendments. Claims 3, 13 and 20 are canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein. Reconsideration of the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 because the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration as the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution; and (c) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because e.g. they are made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

The Office Action states that claims 3-7, 9, 10, 13-18 and 20 recite allowable subject matter. Applicants appreciate this indication of allowability and base the above amendments on this indication. Specifically, the allowable subject matter of claims 3, 13 and 20 is amended into independent claims 1, 11 and 19, respectively. Therefore, this application is in condition for allowance.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 2, 8, 11, 12 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,549,658 to Schweid et al. (hereinafter "Schweid"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

For at least the above reasons, Schweid cannot reasonably be considered to teach or suggest the combination of features as positively recited in independent claims 1, 11 and 19. Claims 2, 4-10, 12, 14-17 and 18 are also allowable at least for their respective dependence

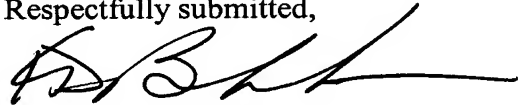
on allowable independent claims as enumerated above, as well as for the separately patentable subject matter that each of these claims recite.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the pending rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102 are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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